

LEARNING FOR LIFE PROGRAM CONFERENCE

The Learning for Life Program Conference is a major event for adult and youth leaders of posts and groups. It usually is held in November for Explorer Advisors, classroom teachers, posts officers, Venturing crew officers, student leaders, and guidance counselors. Some conferences are all-day Saturday events; others are held overnight. The conference may be held at a motel, resort, military facility, college, conference center, or other location that provides a pleasant setting at reasonable rates.

A planning committee appointed by the Learning for Life program team chair organizes the conference. A suitable location, reasonable costs, exciting activities, and an effective training program are planned, often a year in advance. A full-scale promotion effort must be made to get the leaders of posts and groups to attend. Some Learning for Life program teams conduct a second conference in the spring.

The conference format and purpose are to:

- Provide continuing training for officers and Advisors
- Facilitate program idea sharing
- Provide youth input in the planning of council Learning for Life activities
- Update participants on Exploring techniques, events, and programs

Because the conference might be one of the few times all post and group leaders can meet, every effort must be made to plan an exciting, impressive, inspiring, and worthwhile program. The sample agenda on the next page may be used as a guide in planning your Learning for Life Program Conference.

Typical Learning for Life Activities

Learning for Life activities vary widely through the country. Certain events depend on local facilities and geography. For example, those near rivers have canoe races or raft trips. Those near ski areas conduct winter sports events, those near large lakes or oceans have sailing races, and so on.

Many activities are organized on an area or regional basis, such as canoe races, ski or winter sports events, and special-interest conferences.

The following activities are common to many and could be adapted for local conditions. Any activity must be based on what each post wants to do, what Learning for Life is willing to support, and the program team's ability to recruit volunteers and to secure facilities.

- Canoe races, raft trips, or float trips
- Your "town at night" events—Participants visit facilities that operate at night. A bus tour begins about 9:00 p.m. and ends with breakfast.
- Weekend activities at camps or similar facilities
- Beach weekend trips
- Career days or conferences that inform participants of different career opportunities

- Specialty conferences on health careers, law, law enforcement, etc.
- Day and overnight visits to military bases
- Conservation, community cleanup, and beautification projects
- Banquets, picnics, barbecues, etc.
- Ski weekends
- Life skills seminars or demonstrations
- Community-wide fund-raising events—car washes, walk-a-thons, etc.
- Leadership-citizenship conferences

LEARNING FOR LIFE PROGRAM CONFERENCE

(Sample Agenda)

Friday

- 4-9 p.m. Registration
6-8 p.m. Pizza Party
8-9 p.m. Breakout Sessions
- Conference Chair and Administration
 - Facilities, Awards, and Banquet
 - Program and Training
 - Publicity and Registration
- 9-11 p.m. Fun Competitions (Character Education Activities)

Saturday

- 8- 9 a.m. Buffet Breakfast
9-9:30 a.m. Opening Ceremonies
- Welcome and Introductions
 - Format for the Weekend
 - General Announcements
- 9:30 a.m. Post Leader Workshop, No. 99-277
10:30 a.m. Break
11 a.m. Post Leader Workshop Continued
12 Noon Lunch
1 p.m. Activity Board Presentations (See Appendix for Selecting and Conducting Learning for Life Activities)
- Present and detail plans for upcoming activities
 - Present new Activity Boards (Suggestions for new activities from the floor)
- OR
- Post Officers' Panel Discussion
- Getting Others to Do the Job
 - Finding Resources in the Community
 - Turning Students on to Exploring
 - Putting Pizzazz in your Newsletter
 - Sharing Learning for Life programs with Others
- 2:30 p.m. Break
3-5 p.m. Selecting Next Years Top Council Activity Boards (See Appendix for Selecting and Conducting Learning for Life Activities)
- Select next years council activities by voting for the best Activity Boards
 - Elect the activity chair for each selected activity
- OR
- Conduct Character Education Activities
- 5-7 p.m. Free Time
New elected activity chairs meet with Learning for Life program team.
7-9 p.m. Banquet and Evening Program

Sunday

8-9 p.m. Buffet Breakfast

9-11 a.m. Initial Planning for Next Years Top Council Activities

- Activity chairs announce youth appointments to new activity committees
- Start initial planning of next years council activities-dates, times, places ,costs

OR

Group Discussions

- Selecting Learning for Life Council Activities
- Effective Meetings and Activities
- How Can Posts and Groups Help Each Other?
- How to Run a Program Conference
- Communications

11 a.m. Closing

- Weekend Recap
- Challenge for the future

11:30 a.m. Adjourn

SELECTING AND CONDUCTING LEARNING FOR LIFE ACTIVITIES

Several Learning for Life activities are selected each year during the fall Learning for Life Program Conference. The number of activities to be conducted annually should be determined by the council Learning for Life committee prior to the program conference. Each Explorer post, Learning for Life group, and Venturing crew will be asked to bring activity suggestions (written on an activity poster board) to the conference.

Sample Activity Poster Board

Activity title:
Date:
Time:
Place:
Approximate Cost:
Activity details:

After the activity poster boards have been presented during the conference, the conference participants then vote for the top activities they want to have. (Secret ballot voting is suggested.)

The conference youth chair should ask participants to hold a caucus and discuss each of the selected top activities in detail. Then the participants nominate and elect the youth chair for each selected top activity. (It is suggested that the post or group submitting a winning activity board would nominate the youth activity chair)

After the caucus, one committee should be named for each activity (one adult for each committee also). Each youth activity chair appoints conference participants to serve on his or her activity committee. The activity committee starts the initial planning for next years council activities--dates, times, places, costs, and other details. Key decisions should be decided by voting or other means, and recorded on a large sheet of paper or on a chalkboard. The committee should be disbanded after the activity is conducted.

Conducting Learning for Life Activities

The following suggestions are for adult advisers for each Learning for Life activity committee.

Once the chair and participants of each Learning for Life activity committee have been appointed, they are responsible for the success of their activity.

The committee method of planning and conducting activities is the Learning for Life method. It puts responsibility firmly on the committee's shoulders to produce a quality activity. It also gives the committee freedom to carry out a project. The committee chair should give each person on the committee specific responsibilities. Committees may vary in size depending on the activity.

Learning for Life Activity Committees

Chair—The chair must be a youth. He or she should be selected based on leadership ability and enthusiasm.

Committee participants—Each activity committee should be composed of youth and adult participants. Effort must be made to keep a participation ratio of three youth to one adult. In addition to post officers, other youth participants and representatives from participating outside groups can be added to the committee.

Committee consultants—When an activity is specific or technical in nature, special help is needed to ensure success. An adult consultant should be asked to help the committee.

How Learning for Life Activity Committees Operate

The committees should meet as many times as necessary to complete the job. Many activities call for only two committee meetings to (1) get the work organized and under way; and (2) for a final checkup before the activity is held.

Before the activity—The Learning for Life youth activity chair should call the first committee meeting as soon as possible after the committee has been established. He or she should consult with the adviser to complete a list of things that the committee must do before the meeting. The chair should distribute jobs equally so that no one is overloaded, and so that as many people as possible are given definite assignments. (See the Activity Planner in the appendix section of the *Explorer Leader Handbook*, No. 4637A.)

The following **activity checklist** notes items that relate to most activities and will help activity chairs to ensure that all preparations have been made.

Activity Checklist

- _____ Activity equipment and supplies
- _____ Cleanup arrangements
- _____ Date and time schedules
- _____ Decorations, flowers, favors, name tags, place cards
- _____ Dress—casual, formal, costume
- _____ Instructors, consultants, entertainers
- _____ Invitations, announcements, tickets, and distribution
- _____ Location of activity
- _____ Music and PA system
- _____ Participating organizations support, special guests, host
- _____ Permission, permits, reservations
- _____ Person presiding
- _____ Physical arrangements, signs, lighting, toilets, temperature
- _____ Publicity, new releases, call-down committee
- _____ Refreshments, menu, food preparations
- _____ Return of equipment and supplies
- _____ Safety of activity and equipment
- _____ Thank-you letters
- _____ Theme of program
- _____ Transportation, parking, safety, and costs

Prior to the activity—The committee should meet to make sure preparations have been made and that the activity is set to go. This meeting should clear up any concerns for action and let everyone know what the responsibilities are for each person on the committee. This meeting can make the difference between an excellent activity and an average one.

After the activity—The final cleanup and evaluation should be carried out by the full committee rather than by one or two people. The chair should give a full report of the activity at the next Learning for Life Program Conference. The committee should be disbanded after completion of all the details related to the activity.